Miss America

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PATSY WALKER FINDS ROMANCE

PLUS FOUR YOUNG-IN-HEART NOVELETTES

Reducing Specialist Says:

Thanks to the Spot Reducer, I lost four inches around the hips and three inches around the waistline. It's amazing." Mary Martin, Long Island City, N. Y.

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FAT...LOSE POUNDS AND INCHES

SAFELY-WITHOUT RISKING HEALTH

REDUCE

most any part of the body with

SPOT REDUCER

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DOCTORS PROVE BY ACTUAL TEST THAT THIS EASY TO USE SPOT REDUCER HELPS LOSE POUNDS AND INCHES WHERE IT SHOWS MOST. Yes . . . Doctors say that this method of reducing will help you lose weight easily, pleasantly, safely. Nothing internal to take, No pills, laxatives or harmful drugs. Just think of it you can lose weight in SPOTS, just in the places it shows most. All you do is follow the instructions of this amazing, new, scientifically designed SPOT REDUCER.

HOW SPOT REDUCER WORKS. The Spot Reducer uses the age old principle of massage. It breaks down excess fatty tissue, tones the muscles and flesh and the increased awakened blood circulation carries away waste fat economically, simply, pleasantly. In a recent Medical Book, edited by the chairman and two other members of Council on Physical Therapy of AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, the following is stated on page 34, Chapter 18, Vol. 3.: "Beyond all question something can be done by massage to reduce local deposits of FAT . . . There can however, be no question that massage applied to the region of the HIPS can and does, reduce the amount of fatty deposits in this region". This book is a reliable unbiased source of information and many doctors refer to it for the last word in Physical Therapy. This prompted us to develop and have doctors test the SPOT REDUCER.

HERE IS PROOF POSITIVE THAT THE SPOT REDUCER WORKS!

In recent tests made by outstanding licensed Medical Doctors on more than 100 people with the use of Spot Reducer everyone lost pounds and inches in a few short weeks, in HIPS, ABDOMEN, LEGS, ARMS, BUTTOCKS, etc. And the users say: "IT WAS FUN AND THEY ENJOYED IT." The Spot Reducer worked as well on men as it did on women. The Spot Reducer way controls weight, once down to normal it helps retain your new "SLIM FIGURE" as long as you like. Look and feel better, see bulges disappear within the first weeks. The beauty of this scientifically designed SPOT REDUCER is that the method is so simple and easy, the results quick, sure and harmless. Thousands have lost weight this way in hips, abdomen, legs, arms, buttocks, etc. The same method used by stage, screen and radio personalities and leading reducing salons. The Spot Reducer can be used in the privacy of your own room in your spare time.

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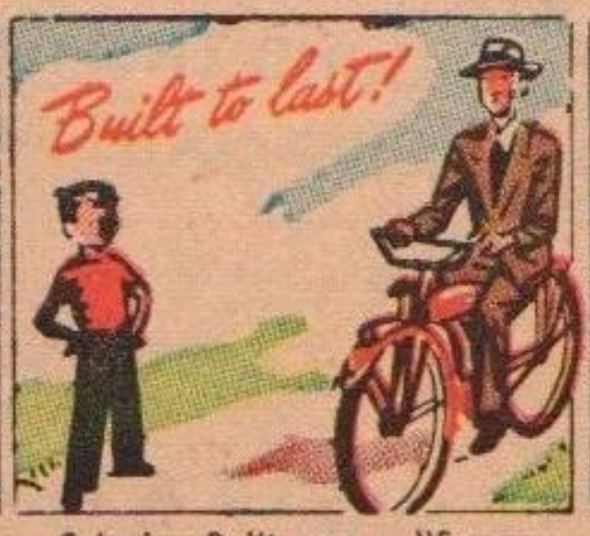

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FOOD FOR FUN

SWEET STUFF . . .

No, this isn't a dessert—it's a happy combination of sweet potatoes and apples in a scallop that's as good as it is filling.

Cut enough cold boiled sweet potatoes in ¼-inch slices to fill 2 cups. Put half of them in a buttered baking dish and cover them with a cupful of sliced, peeled and cored apples. Sprinkle thickly with brown sugar, and dot with butter or margarine. Season generously with salt. Add another layer of the remaining sweet potatoes and top with a final layer of sliced apples.

If you can get them, sprinkle a few "red hot" cinnamon drops over the surface. Bake the scallop in a moderate oven for one hour. There's nothing better on brisk nights!

TECHNICOLOR TREAT . . .

Wash and wipe firm tomatoes, cut off a "lid" from each, scoop out pulp, salt tomato shells and invert to drain. Fry several slices of bacon, and fry the tomato pulp lightly in the bacon fat. Chop up the bacon and combine the two.

In each tomato case, drop a lump of butter with a dash of pepper, then carefully slip into the shell one whole egg. Top this lightly with a spoonful of the bacon-tomato mixture, and set in muffin rings in a slow oven to cook just until the egg is set, and no longer.

Serve the filled tomatoes on a platter in the center of a ring of creamed scallions.

TRUE OR FALSE?

A girl's figure changes "that time" of the month!

TRUE. So don't worry if your "bra" seems slightly tighter during those few days. It's a natural change.

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Smart gals everywhere are reading this slick, new illustrated book. It's a treasure-trove of helpful information on beauty, poise and health.

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Name_____

Address_____

City_____

State_____ Age_____

PATSY WALKER

BUZZ, DO YOU THINK THE SWEATER I KNITTED FOR YOU WILL KEEP YOU WARM THIS WINTER?
OH, YES! IN FACT, I'M SURE I WON'T EVEN NEED AN OVERCOAT!
"SWEATING OUT THE SWEATERS!"
4377

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, MY GIRL FRIEND, SUZIE, *MADE IT* WITH HER OWN TWO TALENTED LITTLE HANDS! ISN'T SHE *TERRIFIC?*

TERRIFIC IS RIGHT! I'D NEVER HAVE GUESSED THAT ANY GAL OF TODAY COULD DO A JOB LIKE *THAT!* I ALWAYS FIGURED SEWING AND KNITTING NEVER ADVANCED BEYOND OUR GRANDMA'S TIME! I WISH THERE WERE MORE GALS LIKE SUZIE!

SODA

MAYBE THERE ARE...BUT I DON'T CARE! *I'VE* GOT *SUZIE!* WELL, SO LONG, KIDS! I'M OFF TO SEE MY DREAM-GAL!

SO LONG, SHORTY!

NUT FUDGE 2¢

MEALS

·DRUGS·SOD

WELL, MR. BAXTER! SO YOU THINK THERE SHOULD BE "MORE GALS LIKE SUZIE", *EH?* WHAT MAKES YOU THINK *WE* CAN'T *SEW* AND *KNIT?*

ANYONE CAN MAKE THE THINGS SUZIE MAKES!

SO FAR I'VE HEARD YOU TWO DO NOTHING BUT TALK! WHAT I'D LIKE TO SEE IS SOME *ACTION!*

I'M SURE WE CAN FIND BETTER THINGS TO DO THAN SIT HOME AND KNIT FOR A MAN!

COME, HEDY! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE HE HAS US GOING BACK TO HOOP SKIRTS AND PARASOLS!

YES! 'BYE, BUZZ! I HOPE YOU FIND A SWEET, OLD-FASHIONED GIRL, JUST LIKE THAT ONE WHO MARRIED DEAR OLD GREAT-GRANDPAPA! *HA! HA!*

MEN CERTAINLY COME UP WITH SOME STRANGE NOTIONS! WELL, SO LONG, HEDY! I'VE GOT TO BE GETTING HOME!

ME, TOO! 'BYE NOW!

ALONE, PATSY GETS TO THINKING . . .

HMM...WHAT A *SWELL* WAY TO IMPRESS BUZZ! IF I COULD MAKE SOMETHING FOR HIM...

I *KNOW!* I'LL KNIT HIM A *SWEATER!* I CAN GIVE IT TO HIM NEXT WEEK WHEN THE GANG MEETS IN THE PARK FOR ROLLER-SKATING!

...BUT SOMEBODY ELSE IS ALSO DOING SOME FAST FIGURING . . .

YES! I'VE GOT A *GREAT* IDEA! I'LL REALLY RATE WITH MR. B. IF I MAKE SOMETHING FOR HIM! AND THE PERFECT THING WOULD BE A *KNITTED SWEATER* FOR ROLLER-SKATING IN THE PARK!

SNAP!

PATSY GOES TO WORK...

TUM-DE-DUM...

KNITTING MADE EASY

...AND SO DOES HEDY...

DUM-DE-DUM-DA-DA...

KNITTING LESSONS

KNITTING PATTERNS

HOW TO KNIT

KNIT FOR FUN

NEXT WEEK, THE NIGHT OF THE ROLLER-SKATING PARTY...

WE'RE ALL HERE EXCEPT HEDY, AND SHE SAID SHE'D BE A LITTLE LATE!

OH, BUZZ! CAN I SEE YOU A MOMENT, PLEASE?

SURE, PATSY! WHAT'S UP?

I'VE GOT A *SURPRISE* FOR YOU!

I MADE IT FOR YOU! I JUST WANTED TO PROVE TO YOU THAT I CAN MAKE THINGS, TOO!

A KNITTED SWEATER! PATSY, IT'S BEAUTIFUL!

PATSY, YOU GO AHEAD AND JOIN THE GANG! I'LL PUT THE SWEATER ON, AND COME OUT AND SURPRISE EVERYONE!

THAT'LL BE SWELL, BUZZ!

MEANWHILE...

HI'YA, GANG! WHERE'S BUZZ?

BUZZ AND PATSY WENT OVER THAT WAY!

BUZZ! OH, BUZZ!

THAT'S HEDY'S VOICE! I WONDER WHAT SHE WANTS?

HI, HEDY! WHAT IS IT?

OH, BUZZIE DEAR, I HAVE A MOST WONDERFUL SURPRISE ESPECIALLY FOR YOU!

A SWEATER! AND I SPENT ALL WEEK KNITTING IT JUST FOR YOU! NOW YOU PUT IT ON, AND COME OUT AND SURPRISE EVERYONE!

A SWEATER? (GULP!) HOW NICE! JUST WHAT I'VE ALWAYS (GULP!) ER... NEEDED!

YIPE! WHAT A SPOT I'M IN NOW! HOW WILL I EVER WEAR TWO SWEATERS AT THE SAME TIME WITHOUT INSULTING SOMEONE?

SEVERAL MINUTES LATER...

HEY, BUZZ! WHERE ARE YOU?

TOMMY! I'M OVER HERE!

THE GIRLS SENT ME TO SEE WHAT'S KEEPING YOU! C'MON! EVERY-BODY IS WAITING!

TOMMY, LET ME EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED! MAYBE *YOU* CAN HELP ME OUT OF THIS *MESS!*

BUZZ TELLS ALL...

GEE, BUZZ! YOU *ARE* IN A PICKLE!

I'M AFRAID YOU'LL HAVE TO GO OUT AND TELL 'EM THAT I SUDDENLY TOOK SICK AND WENT HOME!

NO! I'VE GOT A BETTER *IDEA!* LISTEN! BZZZ... BZZZ...

SAY, THAT'S *GREAT*, TOMMY! YOU'RE A *GENIUS!*

WHEN TOMMY REJOINS THE GIRLS...

HEY, KIDS! BUZZ'LL BE OUT IN A FEW MINUTES!

ABOUT TIME! I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT'S *KEEPING* HIM!

ROLLER-SKATING TONIGHT!

NEITHER CAN *I!*

ER, HEDY... HOW'S ABOUT US SKATING AROUND THE RINK TILL BUZZ COMES OUT?

WELL, I'M ANXIOUS TO SEE BUZZ... BUT... WELL, ALL RIGHT!

LOCKERS

AND MEANWHILE...

AH! NOW'S MY CHANCE! TOMMY TOOK HEDY AWAY! NOW I CAN COME OUT, WEARING *PATSY'S* SWEATER!

HI, KIDS! SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING!

BUZZ! WHERE DID YOU GET THAT *LOVELY* SWEATER?

LOCKERS

SODA-SANDW

IT'S MY *PRIZE* POSSESSION! AND HERE'S A SURPRISE FOR YOU... *PATSY* KNITTED IT WITH HER OWN LITTLE HANDS!

WELL, HERE'S A *SURPRISE* FOR YOU, BUZZ, DEAR... AND WITH MY OWN LITTLE HAND, *TOO!*

GOOD-BYE *FOREVER*, MR. BAXTER!

WH-WH-WHAT HAPPENED?

?

?

YIPE! HERE COMES HEDY TO ADD TO MY TROUBLES!

ER... EXCUSE ME! I FORGOT MY SKATE KEY! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT MADE PATSY MAD, BUT NO USE GETTING *HEDY* MAD, TOO! I'D BETTER PUT *HER* SWEATER ON NOW!

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

WELL, GANG, I'LL BET YOU'VE NEVER SEEN ANOTHER SWEATER AS BEAUTIFUL AS THIS ONE THAT HEDY... ER, MADE FOR ME WITH HER OWN TWO LITTLE HANDS!

?

IT'S MY *PRIZED* POSSESSION! I'VE NEVER HAD *ANYTHING* LIKE IT! THANKS, HEDY!

OH, YOU'RE QUITE WELCOME, BUZZ...

...BUT IF YOU CAN SEE AFTER *THIS*, I'D ADVISE YOU TO READ THE TAG!

IS THIS A NIGHTMARE OR JUST ONE OF THOSE BAD DAYS? TAG? *WHAT TAG?* OH, MAYBE SHE MEANT THIS!

YIPE! I WORE THE *WRONG ONES!*

To Buzz with love! Patsy

NEXT DAY...

HEY, BUZZ! LOOK WHAT MY DREAM GAL, SUZIE, MADE FOR ME... A CAKE!

!

NOW WHAT DID *I* DO?

THE END

CRAB STEW . . .

The next time your one and only comes for supper, serve him a good crab stew, which is just about a meal in itself. With a green or tomato salad and some French bread lightly toasted, you've the makings of a fine supper!

Melt a couple of tablespoons of butter or margarine and add the contents of a small can of mushrooms, sliced and drained. Season with just a pinch of marjoram and cook for a few minutes before adding two teaspoons of minced onion. If you like, you can also add a tomato or two. Let this mixture cook for five minutes.

Now add a pound of crab meat that's been cleaned and picked over. Let it all heat through, and then pour in 1¼ cups of cream or very rich milk. Stir while the mixture heats just to the scalding stage. Pour into deep plates and sprinkle paprika on top of each serving.

POTATOES PREFERRED! . . .

Perhaps you're one of those people who like potatoes, but like them dressed up a little differently. Then this recipe for baked potato soup is for you.

The potatoes for this must be baked especially for the purpose, until they are crisp outside and mealy inside. A quart of well-seasoned chicken broth is prepared, or canned may be used, and the insides of the baked potatoes, still hot, are riced into the soup. Then thicken it with one egg yolk and pour over half a cup of cream and a tablespoon of minced parsley in the bottom of a tureen.

PEARS SUPREME . . .

Here's a fine way to prepare those crisp russet pears whenever you find them on the market. This recipe should satisfy all your sweet teeth!

Peel six pears, but leave the stems on. Make a syrup of ⅓ of a cup of honey, a clove, a small piece of cinnamon and a teaspoon of grated lemon rind. Put the pears in this, adding just enough water to cover if needed. Simmer until the pears are transparent. Then remove them and cook the syrup down to a rich consistency. Serve over the pears, which have been kept warm.

Whipped cream may be added, but it would probably be just a case of gilding the lily!

PINEAPPLE PRANKS . . .

Something new and special for you—pineapple muffins!

Sift 2 cups of flour, 3 teaspoons of baking powder and half a teaspoon of salt together. Beat 2 eggs and add them, with 2 tablespoons of melted butter or margarine and ¾ of a cup of rich milk, to the flour mixture. Beat this batter well, and then stir in 1 cup of crushed pineapple, well drained. Pour into muffin tins, and bake for 30 minutes at about 300 degrees.

These muffins are delicious served hot with butter, but they're so good that you can even omit the butter and still have the family demolish them!

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Don't Miss
PATSY WALKER

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CURIOSITY MAY HAVE KILLED THE CAT, BUT TINA DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO WORRY ABOUT OLD SAYINGS—SHE WAS TOO BUSY BEING CURIOUS!

THE man with the crisscross scar sat tilted against the wall, fondling a blue-black automatic and keeping Tina pinned under a cold, lazy eye. Tina watched sparkles of light dance on the polished surface of the gun, and wondered what her brother Tom would have to say about all this. He was always complaining that she got into more trouble than a curious kitten. But this time, at least, she told herself, it hadn't been her fault. She'd gotten involved in this uncomfortable mess merely to help Tom out.

She turned to the boy slumped on the floor beside her. Poor Reggie! It was too bad he'd had to get mixed up in it. But . . . She shrugged, went back to thinking how innocently it had all begun.

. . . "Here you are, kids!" Tom had swung the sedan to the side of the shell-paved road, braked it, and turned to grin at the two young people in the back seat.

"Oooh!" Tina drew a long, admiring breath. "This is wonderful, isn't it, Reggie?" Her eyes swept over the stretch of white, sandy beach and the snowy, whipped surf piling up along its length. "This is what I always dreamed Florida would be like!"

Reggie, a lean, deeply tanned seventeen, scrambled out of the car and eyed the scene complacently. He was a native, the younger brother of Tom's college pal. "Bet it's a little different from winter up north," he drawled.

"Here's a snack for you kids." Tom was handing out a picnic basket to his pert nosed, strawberry-haired younger sister. "I have to drive to Palm Grove on business. Be back in two or three hours."

He shook his fist. "But I'm not taking any chances, see? Handsome, get a rope and tie up these kids!"

THE CASE OF THE CURIOUS KITTEN

By PEGGY BOYLE

Reggie gasped as he stared after the retreating automobile. "Did you see that?"

"Don't hurry." Tina wrinkled her nose at her brother. "I think I could spend a lifetime in a paradise like this!"

Tom grinned, waved, and was off. Tina and Reggie stood watching till the car disappeared around a turn in the road; then Reggie found himself violently shoved. "Last one in's a flamingo's mother-in-law!" Tina yelled, racing toward the surf. Reggie picked himself up and cantered after her.

The water was as inviting as it looked, warm and buoyant. Tina challenged Reggie to a race and found herself sadly outclassed. "Want to try again?" he demanded.

"Let's sunbake awhile," Tina panted. They trotted up the beach, collapsed on the clean, soft sand. Just then a long black car came speeding along the road. A man in the back seat had been idly watching the ocean, but when he spotted the two sun bathers, he jerked his head back into the shadows of the car.

Reggie gasped as he stared after the retreating automobile. "Did you see that?"

"Sure." Tina looked puzzled. "A car just went past. With New Jersey license plates, I think. So what?"

"That," Reggie exclaimed excitedly, "was Big Boy Blue!"

Tina chuckled. "What a silly name! Who's he?"

"A desperado," Reggie explained, "who used to make this his headquarters. There was a bank robbery, and he disappeared. The police have been looking for him ever since."

Tina thought about it a moment, then shrugged. "If that's so, he wouldn't be foolish enough to come back," she reasoned. "You must have just imagined you saw him."

Reggie shook his head stubbornly.

"Come on, let's have a sandwich." Tina opened the picnic basket, spread a newspaper, and laid out sandwiches, olives, pickles and soda. "You're so hungry you're seeing things," she laughed.

Reggie reached for a sandwich, but his hand halted in mid-air. "Look!" He pointed at the newspaper's headline, which read, "Masked Bandits Escape With $50,000! Orangeville Citrus Company Robbed Late Yesterday in Daring Holdup!" Reggie's eyes opened wide as he devoured the story. Tina, reading over his shoulder, suddenly felt her heart beating excitedly. Could it be . . .?

"'One bandit dropped his mask,'" Reggie read aloud. "'He was young, about 26, with dark hair and brown eyes, and can be identified by the paymaster. The ringleader, a huge, powerful man, retained his mask, as did the other bandit.'" Reggie squinted his eyes thoughtfully for a long moment. "That ringleader sure sounds like Big Boy Blue," he mused. "I'll bet Lt. O'Connor would like to hear about our seeing him."

"Well, let's do something about it!" Tina urged.

"We will—that is, *I* will. You stay here and wait for Tom. I'll thumb my way into town." Palm Grove was two miles away. Before Tina had time to object. Reggie was hurrying toward the highway and she was alone.

"This *would* have to happen," Tina sighed, "and spoil the whole day." She stretched out in the sand, closed her eyes, and felt the gentle Florida sun beat down on her. Before she knew it, she had fallen soundly asleep.

Two hours later she suddenly awoke. Someone was nudging her shoulder. She looked up, wondering where she was, and encountered Reggie's worried face bending over her.

"What is it?" she gasped.

Reggie gulped. "S-something terrible has happened!" he stammered. "Your brother Tom has . . ."

"Has what?" Tina demanded.

"He's been arrested!"

Tina stared for a long moment, trying to understand. It just didn't make any sense.

"The paymaster at the citrus company has identified him as the bandit that dropped his mask!"

"*What?*" Tina wondered if Reggie had been in the sun a bit too long. "If this is a joke . . ."

"It's no joke! I went in to see Lt. O'Connor, and they were just locking Tom up."

Tina's head swam. Tom identified as a *bandit*

Why, that was silly! They couldn't do. . . . A thought occurred to her. "What about Big Boy Blue?"

"I tried to tell Lt. O'Connor about him," Reggie shrugged miserably, "but he wouldn't listen. Said they had Tom, and he would soon tell them all they wanted to know."

Tina shook a red lock of hair out of her eyes and tried to think. What to do? Go tell the Palm Grove police they were crazy? Get a lawyer? Try to see Tom? Ideas whirled round and round, grew more and more confused. Then out of the mist came one sharp thought that Tina focused on.

"Reggie," her eyes sparkled fiercely, "we've got to find Big Boy Blue!"

"Huh?"

"And make him confess that Tom didn't have anything to do with the holdup!"

Reggie scratched an ear. "How're we going to do that?"

"I don't know," Tina's freckles began to glow, "but we're going to!"

. . . Hiking back to town, Tina and Reggie discussed ways and means of trapping Big Boy Blue and his confederates. It was easy to resolve they were going to, but how to go about it was something else again. Undoubtedly, Big Boy was tucked away in some hide-out, of which they didn't even know the location. And Lt. O'Connor wouldn't lift a finger to look for him, wouldn't even believe Reggie's story . . .

A huge black car came whizzing round a curve behind them. Reggie took one look, gulped. "That's Big Boy again!" he said, and his voice was scarcely more than a whisper.

Tina tried to think of what to do. As the car bore down on them, she instinctively trust out a thumb in hitchhiker fashion, then wondered why she'd done it. The car sped past, but a hundred yards down the road there was a sudden scream of rubber tires and the car had stopped. It was waiting for them!

"Now what do we do?" Reggie inquired nervously.

"I guess we let them take us for a ride." Tina's voice quavered a little. "Come on!"

As they approached the car a rear door opened, and a genial voice boomed out. "Hop in, kids! We'll give you a lift."

Fearfully, Tina climbed in, followed by Reggie. In the far corner a huge, beetle-browed man, with black hair, was seated. He grinned at them, thrusting out a blue shaven jaw. "Always like to give folks a ride," he grated. "Remember when I was a youngster, couldn't afford a car." He was in a good humor. "What's your name, girl?"

"Tina." She turned to look at Reggie, and he nodded soberly. This was Big Boy Blue, without a doubt. But why, she wondered, should he be foolish enough to pick up passengers who might recognize him? Probably he thought they were too young to know about him. And besides, it seemed to make him feel good to give people a lift. Tina knitted her brow thoughtfully. Now they were in his car, what should they do? She looked around her. The only other occupant was the driver, a sinister-looking man with a scar crisscrossing one cheek.

Tina's voice was pleasantly conversational when she spoke. "They say it's dangerous to pick up hitchhikers. You never know who you're picking up. Why, just yesterday there was a holdup at Orangeville . . ."

"Yeah," Big Boy chuckled. "I heard about it. I also heard they got one of the boys who pulled the job." A laugh rumbled up from deep in his chest. "A guy named Tom Brester."

"Oh, but he didn't do it." Tina's voice was pure innocence. "The police are looking for a man named Big Boy Blue."

Big Boy jerked erect. "Is that so?"

"That's what Lt. O'Connor says."

"Hmm! And what else do you know about this case?"

To Reggie's horror, Tina said blithely, "I know Big Boy Blue looks very much like you."

Big Boy snorted in surprise, and a black frown settled over his brow. When he spoke, his voice was like gravel. "Take us to the farmhouse, Curly."

The driver nodded grimly. He wheeled off the road suddenly, up a country lane.

"Where are we going?" Reggie demanded.

"Kids with ideas like yours are dangerous," Big Boy grunted. "Might get somebody into trouble. Guess we'll have to keep you out of circulation awhile."

. . . So now here they were, Tina and Reggie, propped worriedly against the wall on the farmhouse floor, and staring into the nose of Curly's shiny little automatic. Big Boy had gone into the next room, and Tina heard a low mutter of voices coming through the closed door. That must be the other member of the gang he was talking to, she supposed. Thinking of this, she broke suddenly into a glorious smile. Since there were only three desperadoes and Number Three was in the next room with Big Boy, that meant they could prove that Tom was innocent, for he was locked up in Lt. O'Connor's jail! Of course, *Tina* hadn't thought for a moment Tom was guilty—but it was a big relief to know that now they could convince the police.

The door of the other room opened, and Big Boy strolled in. Frowning, he stared down at them. "Now what did you kids want to get mixed up in all this

"What is it?" Tina gasped. Reggie gulped. "S-something terrible has happened!"

"Kids with ideas like yours are dangerous," Big Boy grunted. "Might get somebody into trouble."

for?" he lectured reproachfully. "What'll we do with 'em, Curly?"

Curly gestured significantly with his gun. Big Boy rubbed his blue chin. "What do *you* say, little girl?" he demanded. "What do you think we ought to do?"

Tina had been peering through the open door into the next room. From her position she couldn't see the other gangster. Now she looked up at Big Boy sternly.

"If I were you," she said, "I wouldn't want to be held guilty of kidnaping, too. If you're smart, you'll release us and give yourselves up."

"That's right," Reggie seconded.

"Because if you don't," Tina's voice was low and incisive, "you'll be caught anyway."

Big Boy laughed heartily. "Hear that, Curly? Ho, ho!"

Tina sighed impatiently. "Haven't you—er—gentlemen tumbled to the idea that our hitchhiking act was a trap and that you were being followed?"

Big Boy whirled to Curly. "Were we followed, Curly?"

"Naw, Boss," Curly protested. "I didn't see anything."

"You're kidding me, little girl," Big Boy growled. He turned away with a puzzled scowl. "But it *was* funny, now I come to think of it—their stopping us and knowing who I was . . . Hey, Handsome!"

Tina's jaw dropped as the other hoodlum walked into the room. For a second, a speeding split second, she thought it was Tom! Then she knew it wasn't. But the resemblance was so strong he could have been Tom's twin. No wonder the paymaster had identified Tom!

Tina smiled exultantly at Reggie. He, too, was staring as though he couldn't believe his eyes.

"The police," Tina continued calmly, "are probably bringing up reinforcements to surround this place right this minute."

Big Boy was pacing up and down the floor. It was evident a titanic struggle was taking place under his beetled brow; finally he came to a decision. Halting before Tina, he snarled defiantly, "I don't believe a word of it." He shook his fist. "But I'm not taking any chance, see? Handsome, get a rope and tie up these kids! Curly, you get the car out and put the money in it. We're taking off!"

Tina smiled amiably as the gangster who looked like her brother tied her wrists and ankles. "You don't have a chance," she confided.

"Quiet, kid!" Big Boy thundered. "Another word out of you . . .!" Handsome had finished tying Reggie up now. "Come on, Handsome, let's get out of here!"

As the door closed, Reggie spoke up. "Now we've let them get away," he criticized.

"But we've got the proof we need to free Tom—and to convict them when the police catch up with them," Tina pointed out.

There was the sound of a car's starting, a powerful roar as it got under way, then a sudden screech of brakes. The dry bark of gunshots echoed through the air. Hopping like a frog, Tina made her way to the window.

"Look, Reggie!" she gasped.

At the end of the driveway the gangsters' huge black car was jammed between two police cars. Curly was slumped over the steering wheel. Big Boy Blue and Handsome were crawling out of their car, hands up, surrounded by state police.

"Well, what do you know!" Reggie exclaimed softly. "You were right!"

. . . Lt. O'Connor was surprised to find Tina and Reggie in the farmhouse. "How did you two . . .?" he began.

"It's a long story," Tina sighed. "But first tell us how you ever found this place."

"Well, when Reggie came to tell me about Big Boy, I was sure he'd been seeing things. But then I started to think. I remembered Big Boy ran around with a hoodlum that looked a lot like Tom, and I knew Handsome used to hide out here in the old days. So I began to put two and two together, and . . . well, here I am." He patted Reggie approvingly. "You know," he said, "I think you deserve some sort of commendation for spotting Big Boy Blue and telling us about him. Otherwise, we'd never have known he was in this neighborhood."

Reggie ginnned proudly.

"And what," Tina asked coyly, "do I get for risking my life?"

Lt. O'Connor laughed. "You get the chance to explain to your big brother how you got into this mess."

Tina knew exactly what Tom was going to say. And he did. "Tina," he sighed, "you get into more trouble than a curious kitten!"

THE END

PATSY WALKER

THIS IS **ONE** TIME PATSY WON'T BE ABLE TO THINK UP AN EXCUSE TO STOP ME FROM **CUTTING** IN!

"PATSY AT THE PARTY!"

4378

STUDENTS, I'VE CHOSEN HEDY WOLFE AS CHAIRLADY OF THE DANCE COMMITTEE! SHE WILL CHOOSE ONE OF YOU TO ASSIST HER IN MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR THE SCHOOL DANCE!

WITH ***HER*** RUNNING THIS SHOW, PATSY, I CAN SEE WHERE ***WE*** WON'T HAVE MUCH FUN OUT OF IT!

I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT, NANCY! HEDY DOESN'T CARE MUCH FOR ***EITHER*** OF US!

TO ASSIST ME IN THE DIFFICULT TASK OF RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL DANCE, I MUST HAVE A PERSON WITH GREAT *ABILITY!* I'M SURE YOU WILL *ALL* AGREE THAT THERE'S ONLY *ONE* STUDENT WHO CAN RIGHTLY QUALIFY! HER NAME IS...

...PATSY WALKER!

'RAY!

CLAP! CLAP!

WHAT?

I DON'T *GET* THIS!

GOLLY! UNDERNEATH IT ALL, HEDY IS PRETTY DECENT! I THINK WE HAVE UNJUSTLY *WRONGED* HER!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR FAITH IN ME, HEDY! I SHALL DO MY *UTMOST* TO HELP MAKE THIS DANCE A *SUCCESS!*

'RAY!

'RAY!

LATER...

HEDY, I'M GLAD THAT AT LAST WE'RE GETTING ALONG LIKE TWO SENSIBLE, GROWN-UP PEOPLE!

ME, TOO, PATSY! I'VE NEVER *REALLY* HAD ANYTHING AGAINST YOU!

NOW, PATSY, WE MUST GET RIGHT DOWN TO *WORK!* YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I CAN TRUST TO *SELL* ALL THE TICKETS, *DECORATE* THE GYM, *PREPARE* THE REFRESHMENTS, AND GENERALLY *CLEAN UP* THE PLACE! ALL THIS *MUST* BE DONE BY EIGHT, TONIGHT!

IT'S A *BIG* ORDER, BUT I'LL DO MY *BEST*, HEDY!

HA-HA-HA! "FRIENDS", EH? THE LITTLE *FOOL!* AFTER SHE KNOCKS HERSELF OUT WITH WORK, THE COAST WILL BE *VERY CLEAR* FOR LITTLE *ME!* HA!

A SHORT WHILE LATER...

WHERE TO, PATSY?

START THAT MOTOR, BUZZ! WE'VE GOT *500 TICKETS* TO SELL IN A COUPLE OF HOURS!

DON'T FORGET TO TRY *EVERY* APARTMENT ON THE BLOCK! I'LL STAY HERE AND FIGURE OUT WHERE TO GO NEXT!

OKAY, PATSY!

SEVERAL HOURS LATER...

WHEW! AM I GLAD I SOLD THAT *LAST* TICKET... AT LONG LAST!

WELL, HOP IN, BUZZ! WE'VE GOT TO GET TO A GROCERY!

...20 POUNDS OF SUGAR! 5 GALLONS OF GRAPE JUICE! 50 POUNDS OF ORANGES...

HURRY, BUZZ! TIME IS SHORT!

(UMF! GLBM! G-G-NN!)

SUGAR

AFTER ARRIVING AT THE GYM...

BUZZ, GET BUSY AND *SQUEEZE* THE ORANGES! THEN I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO MAKE *PUNCH!*

250 SQUEEZED ORANGES LATER...

I SHALL *NEVER, EVER* LOOK AT ANOTHER *ORANGE* IN ALL MY LIFE!

WE HAVEN'T TIME TO JOKE! GET THE LARGE PUNCH BARREL, THE SUGAR, AND THE GRAPE-JUICE!

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

NOW YOU STIR IT TILL I GET BACK AND DON'T *DARE* STOP FOR A MINUTE!

SUGAR

SOME TIME LATER...

IT'S ALL STIRRED AND BOTH MY ARMS ARE PARALYZED!

WELL, YOU'D BETTER UNPARALYZE THEM QUICKLY, BECAUSE YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME CLEAN UP THE PLACE!

THAT'S IT, BUZZ! SWEEP IT ALL DOWN TO THE OTHER END!

AN HOUR LATER...

NOW CARRY ALL THE TRASH DOWN TO THE BASEMENT!

IF I LIVE THROUGH THIS, I'LL LIVE *FOREVER!* (UGH!)

(PUFF!) AFTER CARRYING THAT STUFF DOWN FIVE FLIGHTS, (PUFF!) THE ONLY THING THAT GAVE ME STRENGTH TO COME BACK UP, WAS THE THOUGHT THAT WE'RE PROBABLY FINISHED!

OH, *NO!* WE'VE GOT TO *DECORATE* THE PLACE NOW!

WHAT DID I EVER DO TO DESERVE *THIS?*

STOP MUMBLING AND GET THE STEPLADDER!

NOW ATTACH THOSE STREAMERS AND BALLOONS WHERE I TELL YOU!

Y-YES, PATSY!

MEANWHILE...

I GUESS I'LL DROP OVER TO THE GYM AND SEE HOW PATSY'S MAKING OUT!

IN A LITTLE WHILE...

HI'YA, PATSY! GOSH, BUT YOU'VE DONE A *WONDERFUL* JOB! THE PLACE LOOKS *BEAUTIFUL!*

THANK YOU, HEDY! BUT I'M AFRAID I WON'T BE ABLE TO ENJOY IT TONIGHT!

OH, YOU *POOR* DEAR! I'LL BET YOU'RE *ALL TIRED OUT!* WELL, YOU JUST GO HOME AND *REST!* *I'LL* TAKE GOOD CARE OF *BUZZ* FOR YOU TONIGHT AT THE *DANCE!*

HA! HA! MY PLAN WORKED *PERFECTLY!*

BUT, HEDY... I'M *AFRAID* YOU DON'T *UNDERSTAND...*

I FEEL *SWELL*, BUT *BUZZ* IS TOO *TIRED* TO GO TO THE DANCE! WE'RE GOING TO SPEND A NICE, QUIET EVENING AT *HOME!*

OHHHH

THE END

Romance ROUND

Ted pushed his way to the center of the gym, climbed onto a chair and waved for quiet. "Listen!" he shouted.

LISSA Stewart sat alone in the crowded auditorium. "Even if someone did speak to me, I'd be too shy to say anything," she thought bitterly. In the town she had come from recently, everyone had known her. But this new place was so big. It had *two* large high schools, and no one knew she was alive, or cared—except, of course, Ted Wallace. He was something new and exciting in her life. She wasn't even shy with him! Her heart beat faster. As soon as this meeting was over, she could meet him at the public library.

A boy had jumped onto the stage and was waving his arms for attention. "We had some trouble last night," he announced dramatically. "Those East Siders made another attempt to steal our banner. Luckily, we caught them. They won't try it again for a long time!"

Lissa was amazed at the frenzy which greeted this news. She remembered hearing that once West Pearville High had stolen the school banner of their hated rival across the river, East Pearville High. Later, the East Siders had returned the insult by stealing the West Siders' banner. Since then, feeling between the schools had become so intense that it was dangerous to be caught on the wrong side of the river. It was even worse to be seen in the company of someone from the other school. That was considered really traitorous

THE TOWN

KEEPING A ROMANCE SECRET IS A TOUGH JOB. BUT WITH TWO BIG SCHOOLS STANDING BETWEEN THEM, WHAT COULD LISSA AND TED DO?

By TRIPP HAMMOND

and would call for swift and terrible punishment from your own side.

Now the football coach was talking. "Students," he said, "for the first time since 1934, it looks as if we'll lick those East Siders. Our team is really good. We'll even win several games from outside towns. The East Side has only one decent player, a guy named Ted Wallace . . ."

At the public library, Ted Wallace was waiting for Lissa in the back near the philosophy section. His face lighted at the sight of her, but he looked around to see if they were alone before he spoke. "Hi, beautiful," he whispered. "Could you use some culture? I have a nice fresh stock here."

She smiled. "Don't need any culture today, thank you."

"I knew you were the intellectual type," he said. "No girl as attractive as you would spend so much time in a library unless she had more brains than she knew what to do with."

"How's your supply of romance?" she asked, blushing.

"Woman, you've come to just the right place!"

When they were in his car, they relaxed and laughed unrestrainedly. "What's the course tonight, cap'n?" Lissa asked.

"Well, mate, I thought we'd sail down afore the wind and stand to at Lukesburgh," he said.

"Isn't that too close, Ted?" she asked, serious for the moment.

"People don't *go* to Lukesburgh. They come from there," he explained. "But tonight they have a good movie at the op'ry house with a good orchestra on the stage. *In addition to which*, there's a carnival in the town."

"Sounds perfect," she said. "Stand out to sea, steady as she goes."

The movie was a good one. Lissa sat happily in the warm darkness, acutely aware of Ted's presence beside her. He took her hand, and she sighed blissfully.

Then the lights went up for the stage show—and Ted gripped her arm. With a nod, he indicated the people sitting in front of them. Lissa saw a group of young people about their own age. Ted stood up and pulled her into the aisle as quickly as he could. "That was close!" he said when they were in the lobby. "Three of those boys are on the football team with me." They said nothing until they were in the car again.

The sparkle had gone out of the evening. "You'd better take me home, Ted," she said.

"If I were a decent character, I wouldn't see you any more," he said. "I could get you into pretty unpleasant trouble with your classmates just by being seen with you."

Lissa felt hot tears in her eyes. "There's nothing wrong with our being friends. Why should we have to hide it from the other kids?"

"Just because of a lot of ridiculous feeling about your having our banner and our having yours—that plus the fact that we always win at football."

"Ted, can't we *do* something about it?"

He chewed his lip, thinking. Finally, he said slowly, "Maybe we *can*. Now listen—"

They talked in front of her house for an hour. That night Lissa slept hardly at all, but she knew she'd do the daring thing they'd planned.

When school was over the next day, Lissa stood near her locker until the hall was deserted. Then she ducked into a broom closet, closed the door, and began a long wait. When it was dark, she stepped cautiously out and made her way along the halls to the auditorium. She was almost beside herself with fear. Every shadow, she was sure, held rough boys waiting to spring on her.

Once in the auditorium she crept along the walls to the side of the stage where the banner stood in its base. Carefully, she lifted it out and rolled it up. Then, with her heart thumping, she found her way out of the building. Outside, she felt safer, but she walked in the shadows of trees and took only unlighted streets and alleys until, at last, she reached the deserted boathouse on the river bank. She almost sobbed with relief to find Ted already there.

"You've got it! Good girl," he said. He took her banner and gave her the one he had brought.

"Oh, Ted, do you think this will make everything all right for us?" she asked.

"I think it'll help," he answered. "Neither side should have any reason to be excited about their stupid old flags now that they have them back."

"But what about football?" she asked.

"I think I can take care of that in the game next Saturday," he said. "You realize this flag business will probably make us fairly popular in our respective schools. Once the major cause of antagonism is gone, we should be able to be seen together without too much trouble."

Lissa couldn't help crying out as they lifted his limp body onto a stretcher and carried him off the field.

Lissa went to school early the next morning, carrying the banner Ted had given her. She took it directly to the football office, where the coach and the team were talking. When she unfurled the banner, there was a moment of tense silence. Then there was a burst of cheering and shouting. The boys crowded around her, slapping her back, laughing, and shaking her hand, and made her tell over and over again how she had got it.

"It was simple," she told them. "I merely went to the East Side school just as it was letting out, and hid in a closet until it was dark. Then I found the flag and brought it home."

The word flashed through the whole school like lightning. By the end of the first class, everyone knew what had happened, and Lissa was almost mobbed by excited students, anxious for even a glimpse of her. By lunch time, she was the best known and most popular girl in the school. She'd long since lost track of the number of invitations she'd received!

It was after one o'clock when the loss of the other banner was discovered. Though it calmed everyone down somewhat, still it didn't detract entirely from the general enthusiasm.

That evening Lissa met Ted for a few minutes at the boathouse again. "How does it feel to be the most popular girl on the West Side?" he asked her.

"I feel sort of dazed," she answered. "But it will be worth it if we can see each other openly after it's all over."

"Was your side angry at losing our banner?" he asked.

"I don't think so," Lissa answered. "They seemed more happy at getting their own back again."

"Good! That's what I hoped for."

"Ted, I'm worried about *you*," she said. "I heard the boys on the team say they were going to knock you out of the game next Saturday."

Ted laughed. "That's nothing. A team often does that when they think a player on the other side is too strong," he explained. "But I don't intend to play in the game. I'll fake a twisted leg or something. If your side wins once for a change, they won't be so bitter."

But at the game on Saturday, Lissa decided something must have gone wrong. Ted was listed as Number 7, and he was announced in the line-up of the East Side players. She began to feel uneasy.

Nevertheless, in spite of Ted, the West Side was playing the better game. They pushed the ball steadily down the field, and the East Siders had to fight desperately to keep them from scoring. Lissa could see that Number 7 was taking brutal punishment from the whole West team. He was on the bottom of the heap at the end of every play, and Lissa felt every blow he received as though it had been struck at her. At the end of the half, the score was six to nothing in favor of the West Side.

And near the end of the last quarter, the score was the same. It looked hopeless for the East. Maybe Ted had decided to play but not to play his best, Lissa thought. If so, he was giving a most convincing performance, for he looked as if he were giving everything he had. Then it happened!

Number 7 recovered a fumble and began to run, but he traveled no more than five yards. The whole West team seemed to hit him at the same time. When they got up, everyone could see that he was badly hurt. Lissa couldn't help crying out as they lifted his limp body onto a stretcher and carried him off the field. The loud-speaker announced that Willy Matson would go in for Ted Wallace.

Lissa was in a daze, but she realized that something happened to the East team the moment Willy Matson went in. They seemed to find new energy and spirit, and they began a slashing passing attack which brought them all the way down the field in a few minutes. Then Willy streaked through a neatly punched hole in the West line and was over for a touchdown. The score was six to six! There was a tense hush as the crowd waited for the kick. It was successful! The finish gun banged before the players could reassemble, and the East Side had won again.

Then came the announcement over the loud-speaker. "An error was made in listing the East Side line-up," the voice said. "Number 7, who played until the third quarter, was Willy Matson. Ted Wallace took his place when Matson was hurt."

It hit Lissa like a blow on the

chin. Ted must have planned it this way. He had used her information to trick the West Side team. He hadn't really been interested in settling the trouble between the schools. He wanted to win, and he wanted popularity for himself. He had used her to get what he wanted. Now he would be the undisputed hero of his school. He could date any of the girls he wanted to, and he wouldn't need her any longer. A sob clutched at her throat. How he must be laughing at her! What a fool she'd been!

It was the custom for the East and West Side schools to hire together one good dance orchestra for the night of their game. The side that won got the use of the orchestra for their victory dance, while the side that lost had a consolation party with any dancing done to victrola records in the gym.

The party at West Side High was especially unhappy that night. And Lissa was the unhappiest person there. The others thought her despondency was due to the team's tragic defeat, and they treated her kindly, but she found that her old shyness had returned worse than ever. She said hardly a word to anyone.

But before the party had been an hour old, the door burst open, and a boy came running in. "They're coming!" he shouted. "The whole East Side school is coming *here!*"

Everyone rushed to windows. Sure enough, the crowd of students could be seen approaching. "They're going to try to take our banner back by force!" a voice shouted. This galvanized the West Side students into action. They moved toward the doors to block them—but they were too late. The East Siders were already inside! Lissa saw that they were led by Ted Wallace. He pushed his way to the center of the gym, climbed onto a chair and waved for quiet.

"Listen!" he shouted. "In the game this afternoon we played a mean trick on you kids. We admit it. It may have been legitimate, but it certainly wasn't too ethical." A surprised hum came from the listeners. "But you people weren't so ethical either. You beat Willy Watson up, even if you did it within the rules. Right now, the poor kid's in the hospital with a broken leg. It'll be a long time before he plays football or anything else."

Ted paused to let this sink in. The hum rose to a murmur. "I say we're both wrong, and now we're even. Don't you think this sort of thing has gone far enough? What's the use of having two poor teams when we could have one good team to play the neighboring towns? If we'd both played fair, there's no telling who would have won this afternoon. Therefore, *all* of us should share the orchestra tonight! How about everyone's taking a partner from the other school and going to the victory dance together?" The murmur rose to an excited buzz. Ted signaled to Lissa, then drew her up to the chair beside his. "I'm taking first choice," Ted continued. "And I choose the nicest girl on the West Side—if she'll have me!"

The crowd was suddenly silent. Lissa realized now that everything depended on her. If she refused, she could make the conflict worse than ever. She had no difficulty in making up her mind. She took Ted's arm and smiled at him. "Why didn't anyone ever think of this before?" she cried to the crowd. "What are we waiting for?" Now the crowd roared.

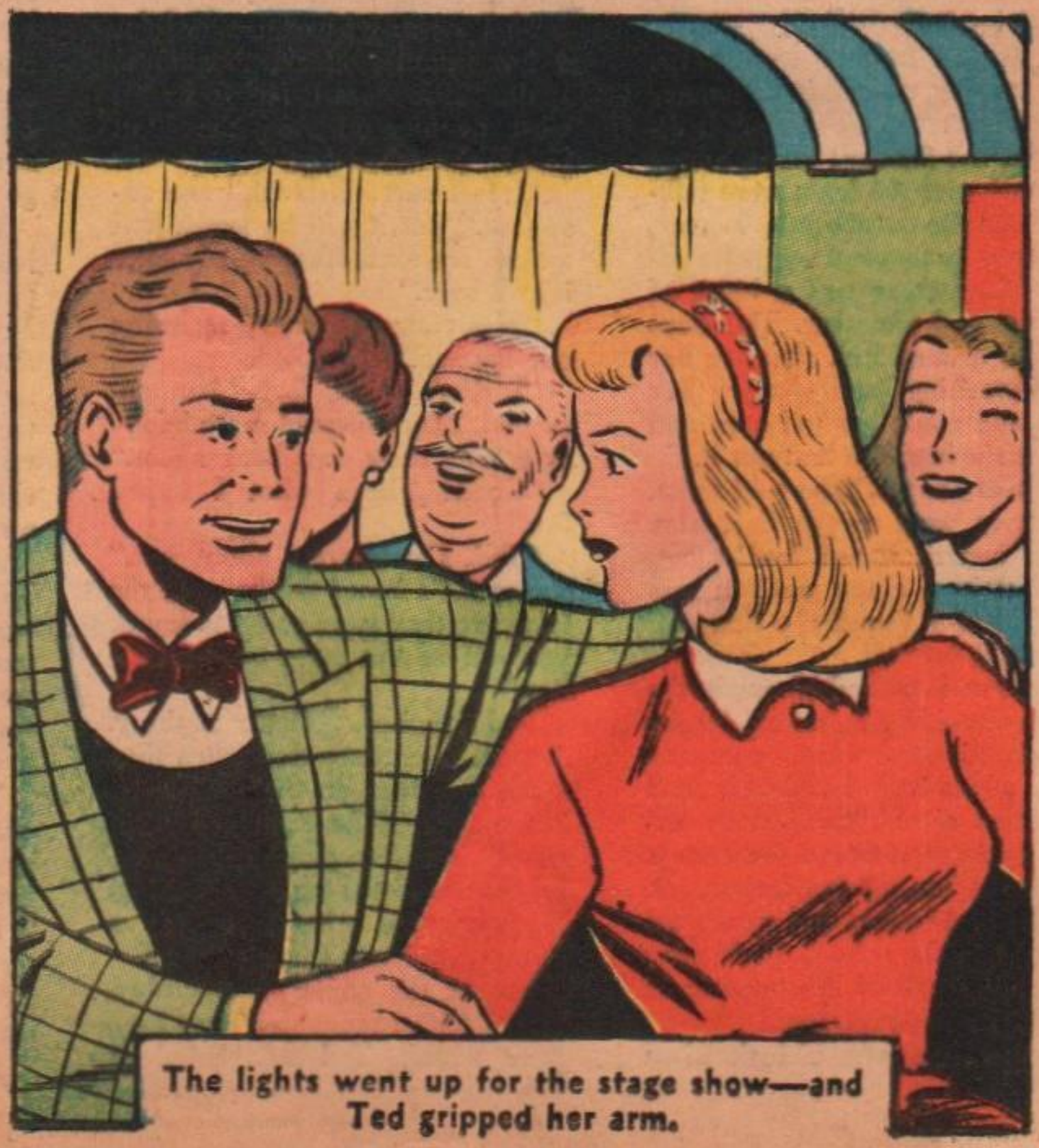
As soon as they were in his car, Lissa burst out, "Oh, Ted, I thought . . ."

". . . that I double-crossed you? When I told them I couldn't play, the coach insisted on sending in Willy with my number. He hoped that would have a psychological effect on your team. But when I saw how Willy got hurt, I got the idea that maybe we could get some good out of the tragedy. That meant *our* side would have to win, however, or yours would never take my proposal seriously. So I went in and played my best."

Lissa snuggled happily against his arm. "Cap'n," she said softly, "forgive me for doubting your navigation, even for a moment."

"I'll never give you another chance to doubt anything, mate," he said, grinning. "Stand by to come about!"

THE END



The lights went up for the stage show—and Ted gripped her arm.

SWEET SOMETHINGS . . .

Whether you need something special for that party you've been planning for weeks or just a sweet dish for the family's dessert, this orange icebox cake will fill the bill.

Mix half a cup of sugar with a tablespoon of cornstarch and add 3 lightly beaten egg yolks, a cupful of orange juice and a tablespoon of butter. Cook this mixture in the top of a double boiler until thickened.

Remove it from the stove, add the grated rind of 1 orange, cool, and add the beaten egg whites. Line the bottom and the sides of a round mold with split ladyfingers, the rounded sides on the outside of the mold.

Spread a layer of the filling mixture over the ladyfingers, then another layer of ladyfingers, more filling and so on until all is used. Chill in icebox for 24 hours, then turn out on platter and garnish with whipped cream.

POPULAR PIE . . .

Want a delicious meat dish that doesn't break the bank and will prove very popular with your guests, try this sausage pie.

Buy about 1¾ pounds of well-seasoned pork sausage meat —regular bulk country sausage, and spread it flat to a one-inch thickness in the bottom of a big baking dish. Bake it for 20 minutes in a hot oven.

Meanwhile, make a biscuit dough by mixing two cups of flour, four teaspoons of baking powder and half a teaspoon of salt. With your fingertips, work in three tablespoons of shortening and add just enough ice-cold milk to make a soft dough.

Cover the hot sausage meat with this, fitting it tightly around the edges and pricking the surface with a fork. Return the dish to the oven for 15 minutes of baking, and then serve the pie with heaps of cold slaw and sliced tomatoes.

CAKE COOKING! . . .

If you're still new at the game and think a cake is way above your abilities, try this recipe—it's specially for the novice cook.

Cream half a cup of shortening, and gradually add 1 cup of light corn syrup. Beat until fluffy. Beat in 2 eggs, one at a time. Sift together ¼ of a teaspoon of salt, 2 cups of cake flour, and 2 teaspoons of baking powder, and add them to the first mixture, alternating with half a cup of milk. Flavor with any desired extract, and beat until smooth.

Pour into a greased tin, and bake in a moderate over for about half an hour or until a straw inserted comes out clean.

When the cake has cooled, ice it with a honey frosting, made by adding half a teaspoon of salt to 3 egg whites, beaten slowly at first. Then beat faster until the whites stiffen. Finally beat slowly again as you add 1 cup of honey. Keep on beating until all the honey is absorbed and the frosting is stiff. Flavor as desired and spread on the top and sides of the cake.

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KEEP BUYING BONDS AND STAMPS

"A smile's a good substitute for a lot of things." He looked at her oddly. "Try it."
IF BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN-DEEP, THEN JOAN HAD NO PROBLEM AT ALL. BUT SHE DID—AND IT WENT A LOT DEEPER THAN MOST PEOPLE KNEW!

A SMILE FOR LOVE!

By K. C. ANGUS

"THE twins are fast asleep, Joanie, so you won't have any trouble."

Automatically averting her left cheek, Joan Taylor looked up from her homework as Mrs. Fisher came into the living room.

"We'll be back about eleven." Mrs. Fisher buttoned her gloves. "I suppose you're going to the Football Season Dance with Rod Martin tomorrow night?"

"No, I'm not." Joan felt her throat tighten. Here it came again!

"You're not?" Young Mrs. Fisher looked surprised. "But you went with him last year, didn't you? Have a spat, or just someone else?"

"I—I'm not going at all." Joan didn't return the smile. She hadn't the courage. A smile would surely twist her face into a . . .

"Not going? Why . . ." Noticing from Joan's expression that she was on delicate ground, Mrs. Fisher tried to jest. "Don't tell me *you* didn't get a bid! You, who are usually *swamped?*"

"Oh, please, don't you . . ." Immediately, Joan regretted her quick exasperation. Of course, Mrs. Fisher didn't know what the barbed wire fence had done to Joan's face on her uncle's farm last summer.

Unwillingly, Joan turned her left cheek to the light. The red scar ran from her cheekbone, close to the ear, right down to the angle of her jaw, with white puckered edges along its entire length.

"That's why." Joan didn't miss the quickly suppressed shock and the way Mrs. Fisher glanced aside as everyone did.

"What a shame, Joanie! Never mind, it'll heal before long. Ready, Tom?"

The door closed behind them. Miserably, Joan sat in the armchair, fingering the long blemish. Oddly enough, the deep scratch hadn't even bled. But it had become infected, and the result would never leave her . . . She shut her mind against the memory. Going to school was bad enough, though she had wangled a seat at the side of each room, where the scar was away from the class. But as for a dance, what was the point in dress-

ing up when you looked like this? Even if Rod Martin *had* invited her, she wouldn't have gone.

But he hadn't. The sight of the scar settled that. He had invited Florence Crane, and Florence was peacock-puffed with the prestige of going with the boy who had been football captain last season and would be again.

"Not going? Not at all?" Florence's thin eyebrows had risen with her voice. "But, Joanie, why not? Don't tell me you weren't asked?"—hopefully.

"Oh, I was asked." Despite herself, Joan glanced across the classroom where Clay McLeod was sitting alone, going over a textbook. Near him, the tall, lounging figure of Rod Martin was the center of the chattering sports clique.

Florence looked towards Clay McLeod and laughed. "Him? Just moved in across the street from you, hasn't he? No seat on the fifty-yard line from him, darling!"

The bell for third period saved Joan a reply, but the barb stuck. Each member of the football squad was given a grandstand seat in the stadium which he could present to a friend for the season. Traditionally, the girl the player took to the Football Season Dance was given the seat. Last year Joan had had Rod's. These days her dates were with babies.

Listlessly, Joan flicked through her math homework. She had put Clay off by saying that she was baby sitting for the Walters tomorrow night. He had really only asked her because he didn't know anyone else well enough. But even aside from the scar, she would have hesitated. You took a chance dating a newcomer, until you knew how he stacked up. Rod Martin ruled the clique that ran things, and if he didn't acknowledge you, well—you just didn't belong. You weren't chosen for teams or invited to parties. And Clay McLeod certainly hadn't made much impression on anybody yet.

Besides, there was a rumor that he was active in Sunday School activities, and in Rod Martin's circle this was laughable.

Joan suddenly tensed, straining alertly. Wasn't that the whisper of a footstep on the path outside? Yes, there it was again. Somebody was sneaking around the side of the house!

Distinctly, she heard faint scratching at one of the basement windows. And at that moment every light in the Fisher house went out.

Unaware of having risen, Joan found herself standing up, breathing rapidly. The intruder must have cut the wires to silence possible burglar alarms. Should she phone the police, or perhaps make her presence known?

The telephone rang. Grateful for having outside contact, Joan groped through the darkness and answered it.

"Joan? This is Clay McLeod."

"Clay! Why, what is it?"

"Well, the lights are out all over the neighborhood, and I wondered if you'd like me to come over with a flashlight. Must be a fuse at the power plant."

"Oh, please do, Clay." Joan felt limp with relief. "With the twins here, and somebody's snooping around the house . . ."

"And you're alone?" Clay's voice sharpened. "Get

Joan suddenly tensed, straining alertly. Wasn't that the whisper of a footstep on the path outside?

hold of a poker or something. I'll be right over." He hung up.

Tremulously, Joan listened again. The footsteps were coming around to the front. If the twins awoke now and started to cry, it would be just too much. Clay was two blocks away . . .

A moment later she heard the murmur of voices outside, and the glow of light showing through the small front door window became brighter. Cautiously, she peered through. Clay was there!

Joan opened the door and stepped outside. She could see the serious features of Clay McLeod, his glasses glinting slightly from behind the flashlight he was directing at the tall, dark, good-looking boy in the flower bed. Rod Martin!

"Rod, what in the world . . ."

"Hi, Joanie." Rod turned his easy smile at her. "Scare you? I was going to the drug store and thought I'd stop by and see how much you could stand before you called the police. Then Galahad here arrived . . ."

"Oh, Rod!" Joan tried not to show her resentment. You either laughed when Rod laughed, or you might find yourself an outcast. "I was . . ."

Clay interrupted quietly. "Poor sort of trick to play on a girl who's alone in a strange house."

Rod's smile vanished. "So what? Want to make something out of it?"

"No," said Clay mildly. "I was just saying . . ."

"Better not." Rod laughed shortly. "You just keep on being a pillar of the church, and don't begin criticizing me. So long, Joanie. The light's going out made it twice as good, hm?"

He shouldered past Clay and strolled up the street. A moment later the lights came on again in all the houses.

Clay switched off his flashlight. "Well, if you're all right now, Joan . . ."

"Yes, thanks." Joan stepped back to the door, turning her cheek from the street light. "It was nice of you to come over."

She shut the door and went back to her homework. You couldn't blame Clay for not standing up to Rod. Few boys did, and Rod was considerably bigger.

. . . Most of the talk at school the next day was about the forthcoming dance, but Joan tried to keep out of it. Florence Crane expressed vast amazement that Joan really wasn't going, adding, with a glance at the puckered scar, "Some people can't afford to be too choosy."

Halfway between tears and fury, Joan headed

home. Clay McLeod had taken her books and was carrying them before she even noticed him.

"About this dance . . ."

Joan gestured impatiently. "Oh, Clay, I told you . . ."

"Baby sitting, I know." His thin, serious features were grinning. "I've arranged for that. My married sister is going to substitute for you. Her husband's out of town, and she's happy to have something to do. So there's no reason now why you can't come."

No reason! Joan's fingers traced the red puckered line. Clay was impossible. She'd just have to come right out and tell him.

"Funny," said Clay reflectively, "it seems hard to get to know people at this school. I haven't been here long, but still . . . At a dance it might be easier to mix . . ."

The scar throbbed as Joan reddened with realization. So that was the reason for this determined "rush" on Clay's part! He wanted to use her to get "in" with Rod Martin's clique!

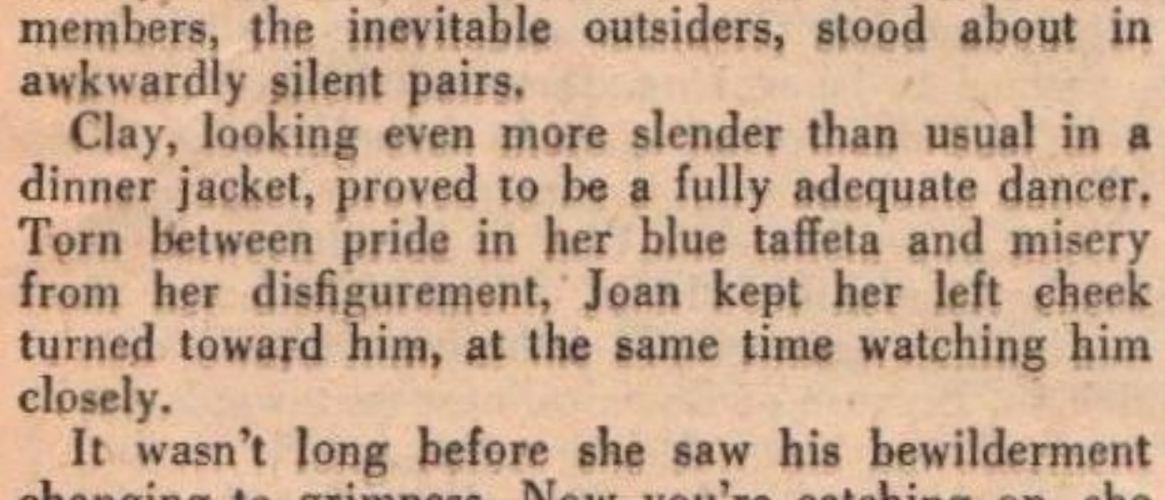
Second thoughts overcame Joan's impulse to flare out at him. By asking her, Clay was destroying his own chances! She'd been very much a part of the Martin crowd last year, but the scar had quickly finished that. She was no longer one of them. And, far from getting "in" by taking her, Clay would merely identify himself with those who didn't belong!

Joan smiled inwardly. "All right, Clay. What time will you call?"

. . . The band in the corner of the school gym had begun to play when Joan and Clay arrived, but the dance didn't really get moving until Rod Martin and Florence Crane showed up with their crowd, laughing noisily. The rest, the studious ones, the scrub team members, the inevitable outsiders, stood about in awkwardly silent pairs.

Clay, looking even more slender than usual in a dinner jacket, proved to be a fully adequate dancer. Torn between pride in her blue taffeta and misery from her disfigurement, Joan kept her left cheek turned toward him, at the same time watching him closely.

It wasn't long before she saw his bewilderment changing to grimness. Now you're catching on, she thought. No one else had offered to dance with her; no one had even spoken. The Martin clique were intermingling, but only among themselves. They even seemed to dance in a group, with Rod, tall and immaculate, the nucleus, as if they were unwilling to risk missing any of his remarks. Joan remembered



"I haven't been here long, but still . . . At a dance it might be easier to mix . . ."

with a pang how she had been in there last year. How could she have been so unthinking of those outside?

The last dance before intermission, Rod approached them. Joan caught her breath. Maybe—but she knew better. It wasn't a kind gesture toward her. Rod wanted somehow to make Clay look cheap for interfering with his fun last night.

"Hello, Joanie." Rod grinned at her insolently and spoke loudly. "Tired of dancing with this church pillar? What about me?"

Before she could answer, Clay said, "Sorry, Martin. The next dance is mine."

Rod barely glanced at him. "Run away, bud. You'll be late for Sunday school. Joanie . . ."

"Sorry, Martin," Clay repeated. "Joan isn't going to dance with you."

This time Rod faced him. "No? And why not?" His tone was threatening.

"Because," said Clay clearly, "since I brought Joan, naturally I'm particular about whom she mixes with."

Somebody gasped in the dead silence, and Joan realized that they were almost surrounded by tense couples. Clay, be careful . . .

Rod's initial amazement turned deadly. Then he suddenly smiled. "All right, Clay—if you're *that* particular. Shake."

Slightly taken aback, Clay held out his hand. Joan even forgot her scar in the sudden wish to warn him. She knew how powerful Rod's hands were. A hand shake didn't mean friendship to Rod. It meant an opportunity to humiliate an unwary stranger. Joan had seen more than one boy forced almost to his knees by the pain of Rod's crushing grip. And Clay—in front of the whole school . . .

Joan looked at him fearfully, aware of Florence Crane's expectant smirk. Clay blinked once as he realized what was happening, but then, surprisingly, a faint smile settled on his serious features.

Startled, Joan looked back at Rod, standing with his hand in Clay's, and saw apprehension replace the anticipatory gleam in his eyes. Little lines of strain were appearing around his mouth, and his lips parted. A fallen lock of black hair lay lank against his cheek. Unknowingly, his left hand came up in supplicating protest, and his knees started to bend.

Clay said, "I *am* that particular, Rod. Some things leave deeper scars than barbed wire."

He let go. Everyone seemed to exhale at once. Rod glared at Clay for a moment, then turned and pushed through the crowd. Joan turned automatically back to Clay as the music started. What had he meant by that last remark?

She barely tasted the punch that Clay brought her during intermission. Oh, Clay, Rod Martin will make things unbearable for you! He'll never forgive this. Rod himself had left, taking a reluctant and flustered Florence with him, but the rest of the clique had gathered in a buzzing bunch, every so often looking over at Clay. It was great, Clay, but you're finished in school affairs now. But Clay seemed coolly unaware. What had he meant?

The band came back in. Joan wondered if Clay

Clay said, "I am that particular, Rod. Some things leave deeper scars than barbed wire."

would want to stay. He must know now that nobody was going to . . .

"Shall we, Joanie?"

Joan turned. Chub Reynolds, the team's right tackle, had come up to them with Beth Morgan.

"That is," added Chub, grinning at Clay, "if you're not that particular?"

Clay grinned, too. "Not if Beth will risk me!"

Before she knew it, Joan was dancing with Chub Reynolds. He was a stout, placid boy with a poor sense of rhythm but an amazing line of chatter. Joan found herself laughing as she hadn't laughed since summer.

"Cut in, Chub?"

Joan looked up, expecting Clay, but it wasn't Clay. It was Red Daugherty, star left wing of the hockey team. After him came Joe Coleman, lanky basketball center.

Joan glanced around the floor, smiling as she caught Clay's eye. The atmosphere seemed to have changed somehow. The clique wasn't hanging together as before. They were mixing with the lesser lights, the insignificant outsiders like—well, like herself! Everybody was dancing with everybody . . .

Suddenly she knew. The clique was broken! The exclusive, better-than-thou attitude had vanished! There was a merry family feeling that had never been there before.

Joan had several bids for the last dance, but Clay wanted it, and nobody argued with him.

He was helping Joan with her wrap when Chub Reynolds and Beth offered them a lift home.

Clay shook his head. "No, thanks, Chub. I've got our car."

"Okay." Chub came closer and lowered his voice. "Clay, I have a cousin in Darton City, where you come from. He wrote me yesterday and said you were football and basketball captain at the high school there. Is that right?"

Clay looked apologetically at a startled Joan. "As a matter of fact, it is."

Chub nodded. "Good. Because quite a number of us have been talking, and we'd like to nominate you for football captain here."

Clay hesitated. "Rod . . ."

"We want someone new. Rod's always been captain because nobody's ever opposed him. He's really not a bad egg, but he's run things so long he thinks the rules don't apply to him. Will you accept the nomination?"

Breathless, Joan heard Clay say he would. He closed the car door after her before she realized the magnitude of it. In one evening he had broken Rod Martin's clique and started a following of his own!

But he wouldn't, she knew. Clay would never play favorites. Everybody would be the same to him. And how unjust she'd been! As if he needed the Martin crowd! Yet he'd kept asking her . . .

Starting the engine, Clay said, "Joan, if I make the team, I understand I get a seat in the stadium for a friend. Would you . . ."

For the first time in two hours Joan remembered the scar. Her hand went to it. Everybody must have noticed how it marred her appearance, and pitied her.

She held her wrap higher against her face. "That's nice of you, Clay, but I hardly ever go out now. Tonight I went . . ."

He turned and nodded at her cheek. "Why not? Because of that?"

Joan nodded desperately. "Can't you understand what it's like—people staring and then looking away—all your life?"

"All your life? Well, maybe." Clay paused for a stop sign. "I once got cut like that, playing hockey. The scar took three years to go, but it went. And if it doesn't, you have to learn to smile in spite of it. A smile's a good substitute for a lot of things." He looked at her oddly. "Try it."

Smile! Joan had never dared try. Just keeping her face straight, the defect was repellent enough. What it would be if she smiled, she couldn't risk knowing. A caricature. Fumbling, she fished out her compact and opened it. Even in the semi-dark, she could see the ragged puckered line on her cheek. Smile with that? To expect such a thing was plain cruelty. She hadn't smiled since the bandage came off.

She glanced at Clay. He wasn't watching her, but he seemed to be waiting. Joan switched on the interior light and looked again in the mirror. Oh, she couldn't! What travesty of a smile could she produce?

Try it, Clay had said. Clay had smiled scornfully when he flouted Rod Martin. Why had he forced that situation? To hasten Rod's dethronement? She didn't think so. Because of Rod's callousness towards her? "Some things leave deeper scars . . ."

Valiantly, nerving herself against what she might become, Joan tried it—and the scar vanished into a long deep dimple! Unbelieving, she tried again. The scar disappeared when she smiled!

"Clay! Clay, did you see? It—it went!"

"Sure." Clay was grinning his tribute. "I saw it at the dance. Everybody did. I guess you'll just have to keep smiling."

For a long time, Joan sat speechless, marveling. "It's rather a shame," she murmured finally.

"A shame?" Clay looked at her sharply.

Joan hid another smile. "Uh-huh. I'd been thinking of taking up some Sunday School activities again. Maybe they wouldn't care for a lot of smiling."

Clay joined her laugher. "Don't you believe it. In the ones I've known, the practice is much encouraged. Wait and see."

Joan smiled surreptitiously into her compact. No doubt about it, the scar was gone from her cheek. And oddly enough, it was gone from her heart, too.

THE END

CHILL THAT CHICKEN . . .

There's good chicken salad and bad chicken salad—but this recipe results in only the best chicken salad!

The secret is to keep the pieces of chicken as large and uniform as possible. Use both dark and white meat, and season the meat by soaking it in a strong, well-flavored French dressing for an hour or so before using.

Crisp one cup of diced celery, to two cups cubed chicken, in salted ice water. Have a cupful of cooked fresh green peas chilling in the refrigerator. When the time comes to put the salad together, drain the chicken, mix in the peas and celery and bind with a tart fresh mayonnaise dressing. Mound the chicken and celery mixture on crisped lettuce leaves, sprinkled with herb vinegar and garnish the salad with pickle fans, sliced hard cooked eggs and strips of red green pepper. And be sure it's cold.

Try this once—and everyone will be begging for seconds!

PUFFED POTATOES . . .

Baked stuffed potatoes are trickier than they seem. But the secret of getting them fluffy and light is yours for the practice.

Let's work with just 1 big Idaho baking potato. Scrub it and bake it in a hot oven for one hour, until it is tender when you pinch it. Cut off a thick strip lengthwise. Scoop out the inside—be sure you leave enough "backing" to keep the shell in shape.

Mash the inside and add to it a tablespoon of butter that has been heated with ⅓ cupful of rich milk, a tablespoon of cream and a dash of salt. Beat the mixture, working fast while it's still hot, until very soft and fluffy.

Fill the shells, rounding on top. Sprinkle with cheese if you like. Bake in a very hot oven until puffed and browned on top.

MIRACLE MUFFINS . . .

One bite of one muffin—and everyone will think you're a miracle gal, too, especially if you let on that the surprise ingredient is buttermilk!

Cream ½ cup sugar and ¼ cup butter together. Add the yolk of 1 egg, lightly beaten. Mix thoroughly. Stir in the buttermilk—¾ cup—alternating with 2 cups flour sifted with 2½ teaspoons baking powder, a teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon soda.

Now, working fast, add 1 cup picked-over blueberries and fold in the stiffly beaten egg white. Speed is important. Bake at about 425 degrees for 15 or 20 minutes, until light golden in color.

See if you aren't amazed by your own miracle!

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PATSY WALKER

OH, I **COULDN'T** GO OUT WITH YOU, BUSTER! MY BOY FRIEND, BUZZ WOULD OBJECT **VERY MUCH!**

WHAT DO **YOU** SAY, BUZZ?

ER, UH...I SAY A GIRL **SHOULD** GO OUT WITH OTHER F-FELLOWS ER, UH...ONCE IN A WHILE! HEH! HEH!

"BRAINS BATTLES BRAWN!"

3229

I, **FEARLESS DESMOND,** WILL **PROTECT** YOU, ESMERALDA, AND THAT CUR WILL BOTHER YOU NO **MORE!**

OH, BUZZ, I JUST THINK **BRIAN BRUNT** IS THE MOST **DASHING** HERO IN ALL THE WORLD! HE'S **MY** IDEA OF A HE-MAN!

AW, IN **REAL** LIFE I BET HE COULDN'T FIGHT HIS WAY OUT OF A PAPER BAG!

35¢

SODA

HOW CAN YOU *SAY* THAT? WHY IT'S PERFECTLY OBVIOUS THAT BRIAN BRUNT IS A CHIVALROUS GENTLMAN *OFF* THE SCREEN AS WELL AS *ON* IT!

OOF!

HEY!

OH, I'M TERRIBLY *SORRY*, SIR! IT WAS *MY* FAULT!

YOU *BET* IT'S YOUR FAULT! NEXT TIME WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOIN' OR I'LL...

OH, BUZZ, *DO* SOMETHING! HOW CAN YOU JUST *STAND* THERE AND LET THIS APE *INSULT* ME? OHHHH...

WELL, I... ER... UH...

YEAH, C'MON, PUNK, *DO* SOME-THING!

BUT NEARBY...

?

HEY, BABY, IS THIS BIG OAF INSULTING YOU?

YES!

SMACK!

AND NOW, BABY... I THINK I OUGHT TO SEE YOU HOME SAFELY!

THANK YOU... AT LEAST CHIVALRY IS NOT *ENTIRELY* DEAD!

GOOD-BYE, MISTER BAXTER! I HOPE YOU'RE NOT TOO AFRAID TO WALK HOME ALONE!

THAT'S LIFE!

A FEW MOMENTS LATER...

HI'YA, BUZZ! HEY, WHAT'S *EATIN'* YOU, PAL? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU JUST ATE A KEG OF NAILS!

AW, HERBIE, I SURE AM SORE... WAIT'LL YOU HEAR WHAT JUST HAPPENED...

AFTER SOME EXPLANATIONS...

...AND SO SHE WALKS OFF WITH THIS GUY AND LEAVES ME FLAT AS A PANCAKE!

BUZZ... I'M GLAD YOU TOLD ME YOUR STORY! I'VE GOT THE *SOLUTION* TO YOUR PROBLEM!

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS MAKE A DATE WITH PATSY TOMORROW TO TAKE A WALK... I'LL HAVE THIS STRONG-ARM BOY I KNOW, PURPOSELY PROVOKE TROUBLE WITH YOU... THEN YOU *SOCK* HIM AND HE TAKES A *FLOP*!

SAY! THAT'S A *SWELL* IDEA! THAT SURE OUGHT TO IMPRESS PATSY!

DON'T FORGET TO WALK DOWN ELM STREET AT NOON TOMORROW! MY FRIEND, *"CRUSHER"*, WILL BE WEARING A *STRIPED SWEATER* AND *CAP*!

OKAY, HERBIE!

NEXT DAY...

I SHOULDN'T EVEN GO OUT WITH YOU AGAIN AFTER LAST NIGHT... A FINE PROTECTOR YOU ARE! WHY IF BUSTER HADN'T COME ALONG, WHO KNOWS WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED!

AW... THAT BUSTER JUST BEAT ME TO IT! I WAS JUST ABOUT TO HIT THAT GUY, *MYSELF!*

HMPH... *SOUR GRAPES!* YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO BELITTLE BUSTER! HE'S A VERY NICE AND *BRAVE* MAN!

AH... HERE COMES CRUSHER NOW! HE'S WEARING A STRIPED SWEATER AND CAP!

OOF!

WHY DON'T YOU WATCH WHERE YA GOIN', GIRLIE ...YA BLIND OR SOMETHIN'?

OH, BUZZ!

HAVE NO FEAR, PATSY! I SHALL DISPATCH THIS UNSAVORY CHARACTER WITH *ONE MIGHTY BLOW!*

ALTHOUGH YOU ARE TWICE MY SIZE AND WEIGHT, YOU STILL DON'T FRIGHTEN ME A *BIT!* I'M SORRY, OLD MAN, BUT I MUST IMPROVE YOUR MANNERS AND TEACH YOU HOW TO *RESPECT* A LADY! PREPARE TO RECEIVE YOUR *JUST DESERTS!*

ALL RIGHT, NOW! LET'S MAKE IT LOOK *REAL GOOD!*

SOITINLY, CHUM!

SMACK!

WAS DAT GOOD ENOUGH, CHUM?

AND YOU TRIED TO BELITTLE BUSTER! HAH! GOOD DAY, MISTER BAXTER! YOU *TALK* A GREAT FIGHT!

LATER...

OOOH!

HEY, BUZZ! WE'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU! CRUSHER WAS ALL SET TO IMPRESS PATSY FOR YOU!

OW! WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME HIS SWEATER HAD *VERTICAL* STRIPES? ANYWAY, I DON'T NEED HIM NOW! IT'S TOO LATE!

OH, *YEAH?*

LISTEN, YOU... WHERE'S MY *TWO BUCKS?*

TWO BUCKS? WHAT TWO BUCKS?

ER... I FORGOT TO MENTION IT, *BUZZ,* BUT THAT'S CRUSHER'S *REGULAR RATE* FOR JOBS OF THIS SORT!

EVEN SO... HE DIDN'T DO *ANYTHING!*

DAT ISN'T *MY* FAULT, SHORTY! I WASTED MY VALUABLE TIME AND I GETS PAID OR *ELSE!*

OKAY! OKAY! I'LL GET THE DOUGH *SOMEHOW!*

MEANWHILE...

OH, BUSTER...YOU JUST DON'T KNOW THE FEELING OF SECURITY A GIRL HAS WHEN SHE'S OUT WITH A MAN LIKE YOU!

OH, I CAN IMAGINE IT! AFTER ALL, I CAN BEAT *ANY-BODY* IN TOWN!

NOT ONLY THAT, BUSTER, BUT YOU ARE SUCH A *GENTLEMAN*, AND SO *CHIVALROUS*...NOT LIKE A CERTAIN "YOUTH" I CAN THINK OF!

HMM! WHO'S THAT HANDSOME HUNK OF MAN WITH PATSY? HE'S REALLY *CUTE!*

HELLO, PATSY, DEAR! IT'S BEEN *SO* LONG SINCE I'VE SEEN YOU!

OH, NO! IT HASN'T BEEN QUITE LONG ENOUGH... ER...I MEAN, AT ALL!

WELL, AREN'T YOU GOING TO *INTRODUCE* US, PATSY?

THE NAME'S BUSTER! WHAT IS YOURS, BEAUTIFUL?

YOU CAN CALL ME HEDY AND PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO CALL *ANY TIME!*

I LIKE TO HEAR YOU TALK!

OH, BUSTER! WE *MUST* HURRY! WE'LL BE LATE FOR THE SHOW!

I DON'T THINK I'D CARE FOR THE SHOW, KID! HERE'S A HALF-DOLLAR...YOU RUN ALONG AND SEE IT YOURSELF!

WELL, I... *NEVER*... *OH!*

OH, BUSTER! YOU'RE *SO* MASTERFUL!

YOU'RE JUST MY TYPE, HONEY!

OH! HOW COULD ANYONE BE SO... SO...(SNIFF!)

PATSY! WHAT'S THE *MATTER?* DID THAT GUY HURT YOUR FEELINGS?

OH, BUZZ! BOO-HOO! HE *INSULTED* ME IN FRONT OF HEDY! I FEEL *AWFUL!* BOO-HOO!

WHY, THAT BIG MUSCLE-BOUND GORILLA! I'LL TEAR HIM *APART* FOR THIS!

OH, BUZZ! *STOP!* HE'LL *KILL* YOU!

PATSY! LET ME AT HIM!

HA! HA! GET LOST, SONNY! FOR TWO CENTS I'D BREAK YOU INTO LITTLE PIECES!

I WOULDN'T SOIL MY HANDS FOR TWO CENTS! BUT FOR SAY...FIVE BUCKS, I'D TAKE YOU *APART!*

HA! HA! I'LL CALL YOUR BLUFF! HERE'S FIVE BUCKS, KID!

WELL, COME ON! START HITTIN', JUNIOR!

I'M SORRY! I MUST SPARE THE LADIES THE SIGHT OF THE PAIN I'LL PUT YOU IN! YOU'LL HAVE TO STEP INTO THE ALLEY!

OH! POOR BUZZ! HE'S DOING ALL THIS FOR ME! HE'S SACRIFICING HIS VERY LIFE TO SHOW ME HE'S REALLY NOT AFRAID! THE POOR, DEAR, BOY!

POW!

BIFF!

BANG!

KA-SMACK!

7

OH! BUZZ!

C'MON, BABY! GRAB A WING! I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU FROM NOW ON!

Y-Y-YES, BUZZ!

AND NOW THAT YOU HAVE FIVE DOLLARS, WE CAN REALLY HAVE SOME FUN!

WELL...ER...I'VE ONLY GOT THREE DOLLARS, BUT WE CAN STILL HAVE FUN!

AND DAT'S DAT!

THE END

WHEN A JAZZ HEPCAT MEETS A STRAIGHT SQUARE, WHO CAN HELP WORRYING WHETHER OR NOT THE RESULT WILL BE IN THE GROOVE?

SQUIFFY MEETS A SQUARE

By JEAN ATKINS

"Y'KNOW," Muttonhead Jones observed, "that's a real gone gal!"

Muttonhead is the sage, philosopher, and ivory tickler of our jazz band. He sat with head bent, ears gulping in the hot notes that came pinging out of Squiffy's saxophone, and grinned rapturously. By "real gone gal", he meant, of course, that Squiffy was a hurricane from Harlem, could dig a divot in Denmark, and boogie-woogied with the Bohemians. That was high praise, and my chest swelled. I was of exactly the same opinion.

Squiffy—real name, Gloria Marie Sanderson—had been the cause of lovelight in my eyes for the past eight months and three weeks, ever since my sixteenth birthday—but that's another story. Somehow, I never felt she quite returned my affection, but how could you expect her to, when she was nothing less than the hottest sax player this side of Basin Street and I was only a mediocre clarinetist? Still, there's nothing that pleases me more than to hear her get the praise that's due such genius.

You wonder why we call her "Squiffy"? Because it's a tag of honor, of course. Squiffy is the only name we could think of that's out-of-this-world enough to compare with her music. If you ever heard her sending on a sax, you'd never again dream of calling her Gloria Marie. It just doesn't fit.

Why, we even name our band after her—sometimes. We call it "Squiffy Sanderson and Her Gentlemen of Jazz". She's the only girl in the bunch, see? Other times we call it "The Boogie Woogie Boys and a Gal". We honor her by mentioning her in the title, and she honors us with her "gone" playing. It's a good bargain.

Anyway, what I want to tell you about is the day we were rehearsing and a square wandered in.—You don't know what a square is? It's a guy with corners who can't be sent rolling by a touch of jazz.—Squiffy was syncopating a wisp of harmony. Muttonhead was bouncing up and down and muttering, "She's gone, she's gone!" And, as I said, I was swelling with pride. Just as Squiffy wound up

"And at what time shall I call this evening?" Leicester was asking in his formal way. Squiffy gave him the radiant smile.

for a final effort, I happened to glance around and spotted this character standing inside the barn door. I forgot to tell you we rehearse in Muttonhead's father's barn. He looked rather out of place so I gave him a quick once-over.

There was something about the fellow that didn't jibe with the rest of us. Perhaps it was his frozen face, the cool eyes and the slight frown with which he watched us. Then there was an odd air about his clothes, too. They were all right, of course, but not the sort of thing a fellow around here usually wears At least, I've never seen a seventeen-year-old man go trotting around in a pair of knickers, except on a golf course. Above the plus fours, he was wearing a sport shirt—with a necktie! Very peculiar. All in all, he seemed to be trying to give an impression of informality, yet he was as formal looking as a judge. In one hand he held a musical instrument case. Oh, ho! thought I. Another hepcat wanting to join in!

Squiffy wound the tune up tight, let it go with a bang. There was a moment of silence; then Muttonhead sighed happily, and the other boys applauded. Above it all rode a crisp, nasal voice.

"Cracking well done, I must say!"

Ten heads swiveled on ten necks to take in the stranger. He underwent our stare with cool composure.

"Jolly good noise, but is it music?" he continued with the air of a debater.

Squiffy blinked. The fellow talked so fast and with such a clipped Oxford accent that one had to listen closely to catch his words. She shook back her mop of red hair, fixed a pair of blue eyes sternly on him, and concentrated. "What?" she said.

"I said," the stranger repeated, "that I was wondering if those discordant screams were music. However, that is beside the point. What I wish to announce is that I am willing to lend my talent to this little—er—soiree. No," he corrected himself knowingly, "I mean, 'jam session'!"

Squiffy looked at Mutonhead. Muttonhead looked at me. I looked at Squiffy. Then we all returned our gaze to this square.

"My name is Leicester Llewellyn Lloyd," he informed us pleasantly. "I have just arrived from London as an exchange student. I shall be here several months, and," he patted his instrument case, "I have brought along my trumpet!" Here he glanced about impressively, opened the case, and exhibited the trumpet. "Shall we join in a little —er—hoe-down? Or shall I play a solo?"

"Perhaps you'd better solo," Squiffy suggested weakly.

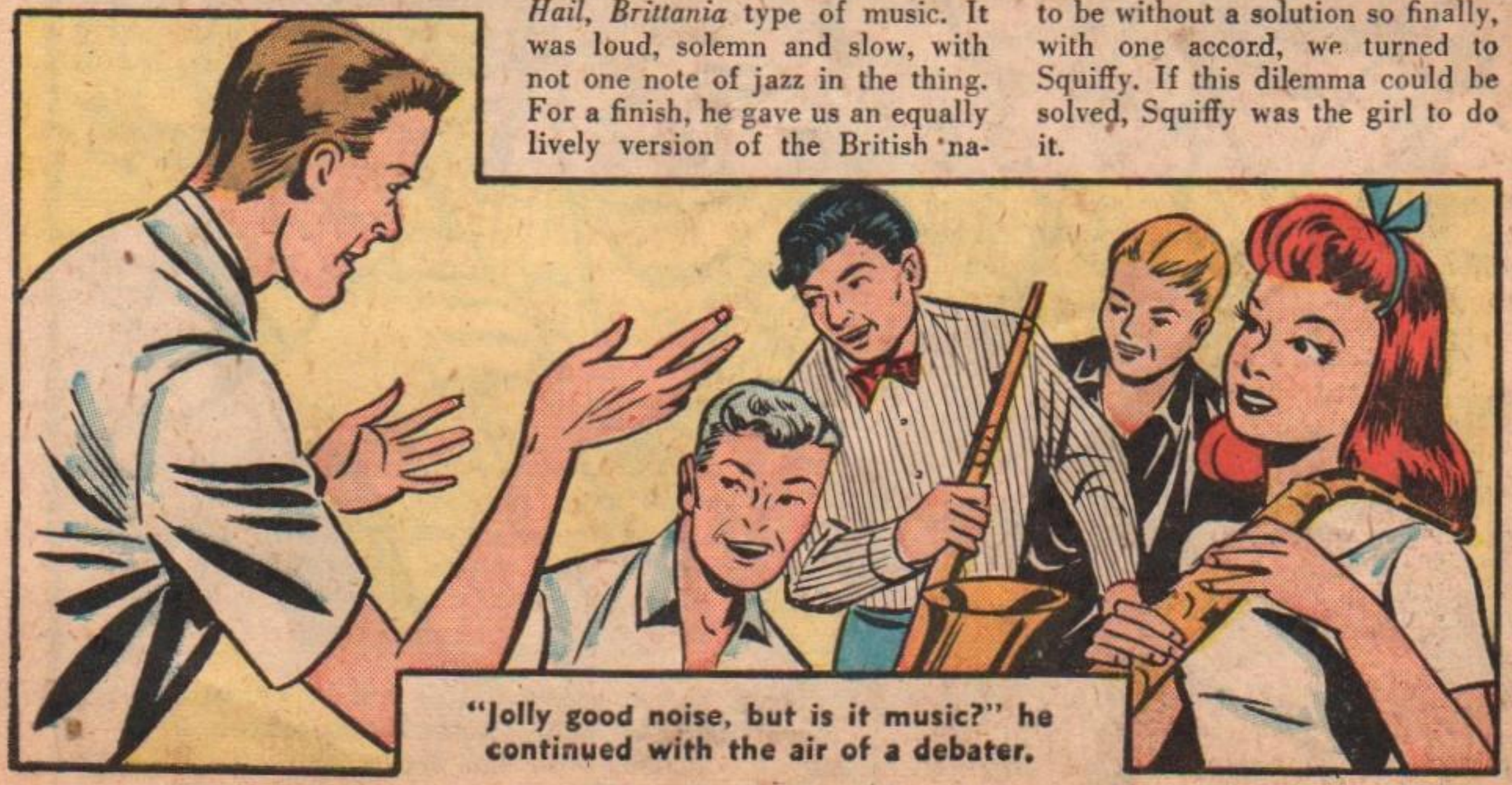
Leicester Llewellyn bowed. He put the trumpet to his lips and launched into a medley of the *Hail, Brittania* type of music. It was loud, solemn and slow, with not one note of jazz in the thing. For a finish, he gave us an equally lively version of the British national anthem.

"Jolly good, what?" he exclaimed, stowing away the trumpet. We maintained an awe-struck silence, and Leicester glanced at his watch. "Must toot along now," he continued. "You'll be here tomorrow afternoon? I'll come around and—er—sit in with you. Right? Cheerio!" Gathering up the trumpet case, he disappeared in a flurry of knickers, and each of us pinched himself.

"This," Squiffy proclaimed, "is an international situation!"

A conference was in order. We Gentlemen of Jazz put our heads together and considered the problem from all its angles. The simple solution, of course, and one which I favored strongly, would be to bar the door on the British chap next time he showed up and inform him in forthright Yankee fashion that there were no vacancies. But that, Muttonhead argued, would seem to cast a shadow on our brand of American hospitality. After all, Leicester Llewellyn was an exchange student, a guest of the nation, and in the circumstances the good old brushoff would be scarcely polite.

What was the alternative? Invite him to join the band, and therefore ruin our fine jazz? Undoubtedly, Leicester's trumpeting was as stately and majestic as His Majesty's Navy dropping anchor —it was also about as jivey as a mutton chop. The problem seemed to be without a solution so finally, with one accord, we turned to Squiffy. If this dilemma could be solved, Squiffy was the girl to do it.



"Jolly good noise, but is it music?" he continued with the air of a debater.

She met our battery of pleading eyes with a calm smile. Deliberately pausing to pat into place the swirls of bright hair at her shoulders, she surveyed us dreamily.

"Why," she suggested, "don't we make Leicester our official trumpeter? At the start of a program, we could have him play the national anthem. Then at the end he could wind things up with a military march."

There was a moment of silence as we digested this idea; then a roar of approval shook the roof of the barn. "Squiffy," Muttonhead sobbed in broken gratitude, "you're a genius! A gone genius!"

Squiffy nodded. "It's nothing at all," she murmured. "Any time." Then she added musingly, "He may not be groovy, but he *is* cute!"

I think it was at that precise moment that I came to the not so startling conclusion that I had a rival.

. . . The next afternoon we tensely waited for Leicester to bound in. We had to sell him on Squiffy's idea, and it might be a ticklish business. What if the square insisted on horning into our jazz numbers? As the minutes crept by, a wild hope grew in my heart that perhaps he wouldn't show up at all. That would solve things neatly. But, just as Muttonhead consulted his watch and I shot a glance of restrained glee at Squiffy, a shadow darkened the barn door. Leicester had arrived.

"Cheerio, blokes!" he saluted us. "A topping day and all that. Am I late?"

Muttonhead nudged Squiffy. It was up to her to break the news to Leicester.

"Not at all," Squiffy smiled cordially. "Leicester, we've been thinking, and we've decided to make you a very important part of our band."

"Charmed, old thing!"

"Can you play the national anthem?"

"*God Save the King?* Why, certainly!"

"No, no, I mean *The Star Spangled Banner?*"

We held our collective breath. Leicester hesitated, considered, and nodded. "I think so," he agreed. "With a little practice."

Muttonhead sighed in relief. I sighed, period. Squiffy continued, "And you know a few military marches?"

"Oh, yes, rather!" Leicester was beaming.

"Well, there it is, all arranged." Squiffy shrugged prettily. "You'll open our sessions with the national anthem and close them with a march. Now let's rehearse!"

"Righto!" Leicester snapped open his trumpet case with a flourish. "But what about the hot stuff, the—er—jitter-boogie, et cetera?"

There was a painful silence. "Leicester," Squiffy finally spoke, "we want you to concentrate on straight music. It's very important!"

"Um, well, okey doke." Leicester lifted a suspicious eyebrow, and I hoped he'd take an indignant walk. But there was no getting rid of him that easily!

. . . The Gentlemen of Jazz were scheduled to play in the school auditorium the following Friday for a function called The Jitterbugs' Hop. It would be an evening of free swinging boogie-woogie, attended by all the best hepcats and jitterbugs, and we devoted

"Leicester," Squiffy finally spoke, "we want you to concentrate on straight music. It's very important!"

our free afternoons during the week to intensive rehearsals. The Jitterbugs' Hop would be the high spot of the year so far as we were concerned, and we intended to make it a memorable night.

As the days progressed, our British import looked less and less happy. He had started with a fine frenzy of enthusiasm, practicing the *Star Spangled Banner* till we begged him in sheer humanity to take a turn at *God Save the King*. For his marches he had pat, solemn, stately pieces that would probably have done credit to the Coldstream Guards. But a suspicion seemed to grow in him that he was being left out of things. We didn't dare let him take part in our jazz numbers, of course—a touch of English fog would have murdered them—and he went about with a hurt look that made Muttonhead uncomfortable and me somewhat hopeful.

However, I, too, soon began to feel less happy. To my eyes, it seemed that Squiffy was developing an unnecessary fondness for Leicester Llewellyn. Perhaps it was natural for her to try to cheer him up, but did her consoling smile have to be so sweet? And what was happening to her evenings so that I could never make a date with her? I dreamed of the time when Leicester would have to pack up and return to his native England, and these were my only pleasant moments. Perhaps then Squiffy would again deign to notice me and my squeaky clarinet.

One day during rehearsal I spotted Squiffy and Leicester chatting at the far end of the barn. I edged closer to catch what was going on.

"And at what time shall I call this evening?" Leicester was asking in his formal way.

Squiffy gave him the radiant smile. "Same time as usual."

That did it. On the spot I became an embittered youth. So Leicester was dating my girl—or at least whom I *personally* considered as my girl! I'd been suspecting it all along, of course, but knowing for sure was even worse.

The rest of the week was torture. I couldn't leave the band, for I couldn't bear being away from Squiffy. But each time I saw Leicester and her with their heads together, it was like having a tooth pulled. My face grew darker each day, and each day Leicester's grew lighter.

. . . Friday evening we assembled early on the stage of the auditorium. The Gentlemen of Jazz were on edge, eager to rock the hepcats and bounce grace notes off the chandeliers. Muttonhead Jones rippled light chords on the baby grand, I fussed with the mouthpiece of my clarinet, and Leicester paced up and down, waiting to render his square solo to start the program. Only Squiffy seemed relaxed, dawdling with a slight smile over the sheet music. I watched her with admiration, even though I was heartbroken. She'd really send 'em tonight!

Every five minutes Leicester would turn to Muttonhead and say, "Now, old boy?" Finally the time came, the jitterbugs were gathered, and Muttonhead nodded. Our British cousin strode to the center of the stage, bowed solemnly, and raised his trumpet. At the first notes everyone came to his feet and stood gravely at attention.

I must confess, to be fair, that I had never before heard the national anthem played so movingly. This English boy's rendition had us all quivering. For my part, I almost regretted disliking Leicester—but not quite! I still consoled myself with the fact that he couldn't play jazz. After all, that was my only advantage.

I must confess, to be fair, that I had never before heard the national anthem played so movingly.

As Leicester finished, silence held a moment, then broke before an appreciative round of applause. He flushed happily, and we congratulated him, then set to work on our evening of jazz.

The program went swimmingly. We gave them dance music, mixed with concert pieces, hot and sizzling or low and blue, and they all loved it. One after another, we took solos in our favorite pieces. Muttonhead roused a storm of approval with a jivey piano recital. I even got a hand for my clarinet work. And all evening Leicester sat watching us, moody and hungry-looking.

Finally came the piece de resistance—Squiffy's special composition arranged for a saxophone. We counted on it to set the crowd delirious and provide the night's smashing finale. As we swung into it, all eyes rested on Squiffy, who sat radiant and ready, her bright hair gleaming like a torch.

At her cue she came in strong and solid. I listened a moment, my heart turning somersaults. Squiffy's sax was more eloquent than ever, pure jazz poetry. I watched her worshipfully from the corner of my eye, then turned to stare. Squiffy was putting her saxophone down, smiling broadly—yet the solo continued unbroken! Behind her stood none other than Leicester with another sax, playing like a hep angel!

The crowd spotted him just as I did, and an electric shock ran through the house. Muttonhead looked up from the piano, slid quietly off the stool. A stunned hush gave way to a rhythmic sway as Leicester picked up every listener with his wild, bewitching improvisations. A new jazz star had been born! The evening was Leicester's!

As the last note died away, the roof came down. Leicester was mobbed by shouting, whistling hepcats, who forced him to play encore after encore. Shaking my head, I sought out Squiffy.

"What goes on?" I demanded.

Squiffy's blue eyes danced. "Leicester kept insisting he could play jazz," she explained. "I didn't believe him, but I gave him a private hearing. And, believe it or not, he'd picked it up in less than a week just as though he'd been born in Basin Street. So I rehearsed him every evening and arranged this debut." Squiffy tossed back her red hair and smiled modestly. "You see, I realized Leicester was a greater genius than I am!"

"You mean," I goggled unbelievingly, "all those dates were just rehearsals? No—no romance?"

Squiffy stared at me, then smiled in an almost motherly way. "Silly! Leicester has a girl in England—named Lavinia!"

This seemed too good to be true. I had to find out more. "And what are you doing tomorrow night?" I demanded.

"Going dancing with you," Squiffy said softly.

. . . Well, that's the story, folks. Sorry, but I have to go now, or I'll be late for cricket practice. Yes, cricket. Leicester has organized a team, you see. Squiffy bowls for us, and I— I'm a jolly good wicket keeper!

THE END

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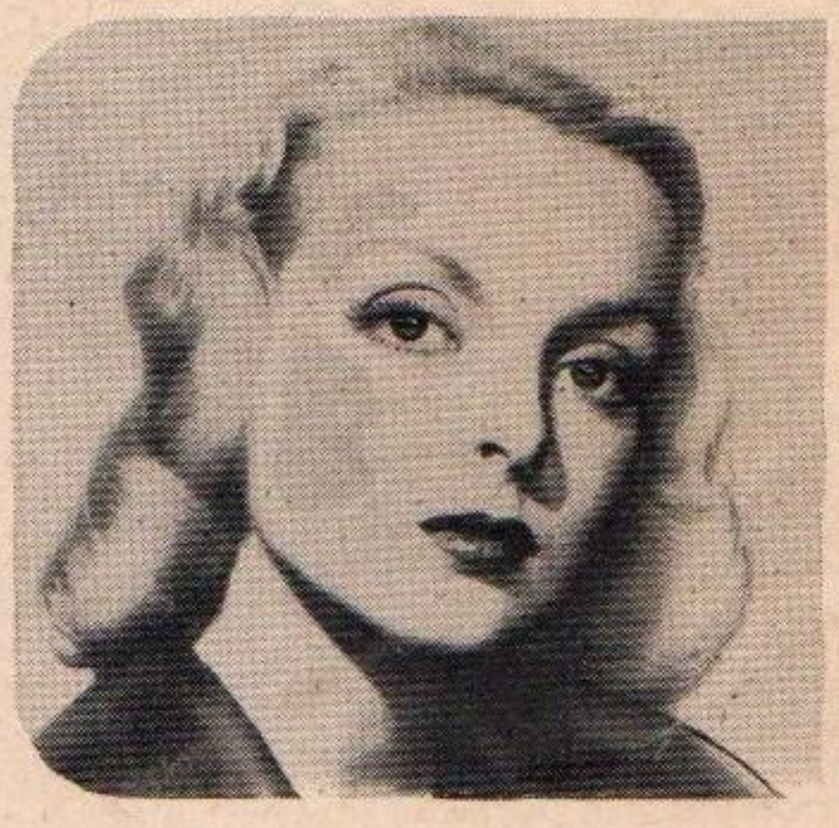

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